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REMARKS

In the Office Action, claims 24 and 26 were rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gruner (U.S. Patent No. 5,634,466). Claims 1-8 and 36 were rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Conner et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,39,689) in view of Trotta (U.S. Patent No. 6,325,790). Claims 9 and 28-35 were rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Conner et al. in view of Trotta in further view of Gruner or Gruner in further view of Conner et al. in view of Trotta. Claims 15-17, 19-20, 22-23, 44 and 48-50 were allowed. Claim 25 was objected to as allowable if amended.

Independent claim 24 recites a thickness of the film less than 7 microns. The Examiner alleges the thickness as obvious due to lack of a statement of the thickness solving a problem, being used for a particular purpose, or providing an advantage. The mylar sheet 114 of Gruner is provided as an external cover (col. 4, lines 39-41 and Figures 7A and 7B). The mylar 114 is not disclosed as thin since physical protection is provided. The mylar sheet 114 of Gruner is not for internal use, but extends over even the lens 106. The sheet also must deal with rotation on the lens 106 relative to the sheet 114 (col. 4, lines 36-44), so would be made thicker. A thin film would not have been used for external physical protection. A thick cover would have been used. The claimed thickness provides a desired trade-off between avoiding degradation of the acoustic signal and dielectric strength to allow a smaller lens (see application page 5, lines 21-29).

Independent claim 1 recites a non-conductive braid where the shaft is free of electrically conductive material. The Examiner alleges obviousness of substituting the nylon braid of Trotta into the imaging catheter of Conner et al. However, the imaging catheter of Conner et al. includes guide wires 82 and a helical wound flat spring wire tube 84 (col. 4, lines 39-48; Fig. 2). The wire tube 84 provides electrical isolation for the internal imaging conductors (col. 4, lines 47-49). The wire tube 84 is made of aluminum or other electrically conductive metal (col. 4, lines 49-54). Since Conner et al. show an imaging catheter, the conductive tube is provided for electrical isolation. There is no suggestion to provide a shaft free of electrically conductive material.

Independent claim 29 recites a non-conductive braid where the shaft is free of electrically conductive material. As discussed above for claim 1, the cited references do not suggest a non-conductive braid.

The dependent claims are allowable for the same reason as the claims from which they depend or the same reasons discussed above for an independent claim with similar or the same limitation as the dependent claim. Further limitations of the dependent claims distinguished from the references cited to reject the claims. For example, claims 2, 3, 30 and 31 recite mono-filament material. Conner et al. and Trotta do not disclose mono-filament material

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CONCLUSION:

Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance and seeks early allowance thereof. If for any reason, the Examiner is unable to allow the application but believes that an interview would be helpful to resolve any issues, he is respectfully requested to call the undersigned at (650) 694-5810 or Craig Summerfield at (312) 321-4726.

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